



## **Office of the Inspector General**

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### **Prisons' Inspector General identifies improvements in annual review, but problems persist in fiscal accountability and inmate safety**

SACRAMENTO—The state's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has improved its record for implementing past audit recommendations, but some critical recommendations remain unaddressed even after several years, the Office of the Inspector General reported today.

"In the last three years, our accountability audits have motivated the department to examine and improve its operations, moving from a 69 percent success rate in our initial accountability audits to an 86 percent success rate in 2008," said Chief Assistant Inspector General Jerry Twomey. "However, we're concerned that the department has failed to address key recommendations, such as collecting millions of dollars in overpayments or correcting safety issues."

The Inspector General's office performs annual accountability audits to follow up on previously identified problems. The accountability audits provide an incentive for the department to carry out recommendations that have gone unaddressed or slipped through the cracks.

This year's accountability audit evaluates the department's efforts to address 212 unresolved recommendations identified in 37 audits that the Inspector General's office

issued between 2000 and 2006. While four audits were reviewed for the first time, the remaining 33 audits have been reviewed at least once in past accountability audits.

For the four first-time follow-ups, the department successfully addressed 65 percent of the original recommendations, including improving the process for identifying maximum custody inmates who pose a greater safety and security risk and thus should not be placed in the general population.

However, the department failed to implement several critical recommendations. For example, the department still does not consistently ensure that all correctional officers at armed posts complete quarterly weapons qualifications. Ignoring this recommendation could endanger staff and inmates and open the state to litigation.

In another example, the department has yet to develop a process to properly account for leave time granted to employees for union activities, potentially wasting state funds. The department has also neglected to collect overpayments from contractors that coordinate substance abuse treatment services—nearly \$5.6 million.

The 2008 accountability audit also examines the status of unresolved recommendations from 33 audits discussed in previous accountability audits. The department successfully carried out 41 percent of the 171 recommendations left over from previous years. These implemented recommendations range from better tool control procedures to improved fiscal controls over invoice processing for medical services.

Despite the department's progress, the Inspector General's office is troubled by the nature and scope of the lingering recommendations from these 33 audits, some of which are now seven years old.

For instance, in Adult Programs, the Inspector General's office noted that inmates at California State Prison, Solano, who suffer from seizures continue to be placed in upper bunks, putting them at risk for injury—and putting the state at risk for litigation. In another example, California State Prison, Sacramento, inmates still do not receive dental exams within 90 days of arrival, as required by a federal court order.

According to the Division of Juvenile Justice, it still has not ended the practice of isolating youthful offenders in their rooms for long periods. The Inspector General's 2005 special review found that this practice of long periods of confinement might have contributed to a youthful offender's suicide.

"Our accountability audits have made a difference, and the department has demonstrated that it can follow through with our recommendations," said Twomey. "I can only hope that

the department holds itself accountable for implementing these remaining recommendations.”

The entire 2008 accountability audit may be viewed and downloaded from the Office of the Inspector General’s Web site at <http://www.oig.ca.gov/>.

The Office of the Inspector General is an independent state agency responsible for oversight of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The office carries out its mission by conducting audits, special reviews, and investigations of the department to uncover criminal conduct, administrative wrongdoing, poor management practices, waste, fraud, and other abuses by staff, supervisors, and management. The Office of the Inspector General conducted this accountability audit under the authority provided in California Penal Code section 6126.

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